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BEEF
PRODUCTION
ON THE FARM



BEEF CATTLE are well suited to farms which have sufficient nontillable land or other low-priced land suitable for pasture purposes and a sufficient acreage of crop land for production of the grain and roughages needed for wintering and fattening purposes.

On farms where the sale of beef cattle provides the major portion of the farm income the breeding herd should be large enough to provide at least one carload of cattle for sale each year.

Ordinarily, under farm conditions with adequate feed and proper care, one mature bull will be needed for 30 to 40 cows.

An income may be derived from the sale of milk or cream as well as from beef by using beef-type cows with pronounced milking tendency.

Uniformity in type and quality of offspring is an aid in marketing.

Highly bred beef calves may be developed into desirable beef by weaning time if they are creep fed grain on good pasture.

This bulletin supersedes Farmers' Bulletin 1073, Growing Beef on the Farm.

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BEEF PRODUCTION ON THE FARM

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DEVELOPMENT OF BEEF CATTLE IN THE UNITED STATES

CATTLE have been raised and used for beef on farms in the United States almost from the time of the first settlement. For a long period there was a large surplus of beef for export, and while that no longer exists, the beef consumed by our citizens has practically always been produced within the present boundaries of our country. The once seemingly limitless area of open range where large numbers of our beef cattle have been raised has been gradually restricted by the expansion of productive farming areas and the extension of fenced holdings. The reduction in carrying capacity of the open range, together with the great increase in the Nation's population, has led to the development of present-day methods of beef production.

Formerly the bulk of the cattle which went to market were 5 and 6 years old, but in these days comparatively few are over 4 years of age, and the bulk are probably not much over 3 years. A large percentage of the surplus stock from the breeding herds on the ranges in the Western States is shipped to central markets for slaughter. Considerable numbers are moved to Corn Belt farms where they are fed principally farm-grown crops for a few months until a high degree of finish is obtained.

Many farms are so situated as to make it economically advisable to raise as well as to fatten beef cattle. For example, a farm may have a large proportion of its area composed of woods or rough, broken, or otherwise nontillable land which is suitable for grazing. (Fig. 1.) If this pasture is fenced, the breeding herd and stock cattle may be pastured there during the grazing season without need for much farm labor. The labor may be devoted to the production of feed crops, perhaps some cash crops as well and

possibly in connection with other enterprises also. These other enterprises, such as feeding steers for market, producing whole milk or cream, and raising hogs or poultry, may be supplemental to the main one.

The production of fat yearlings from a herd of beef cows which have a marked milking tendency is another type of operation. Beef cows with that tendency may be classed as dual-purpose cows. The systems of management for such cows and calves are discussed later.

THE BREEDING STOCK

Opinions differ as to the breed of cattle best suited for farm beef production, although under ordinary farm conditions and with proper care and feeding any of the leading beef breeds should give



FIGURE 1.—Aberdeen-Angus cows and calves grazing on land well adapted for use as pasture

good results. Accordingly, selection of a particular breed is largely based on individual preference. The principal breeds of beef cattle in this county to-day are discussed in Farmers' Bulletin 612, Breeds of Beef Cattle.

One who contemplates raising beef cattle on a farm will do well to read the above-mentioned bulletin and also to visit farms where herds of beef cattle are being handled on a commercial basis, in order to have a better understanding of the business. It is generally advantageous to raise cattle of one of the breeds already in the community. If this procedure is followed it is often possible to reduce overhead expense by exchanging bulls with neighbors or by entering into community or association ownership. Moreover, the latter arrangement may make it possible to have a higher-quality bull than could be afforded by individual purchase.

If it is desired to obtain an income from the sale of milk or cream as well as from cattle fattened for market, breeding stock showing pronounced milking tendency should be selected. (Fig. 2.)

THE HERD BULL

A healthy, registered bull displaying quality in a high degree and at the same time representing approved type for the breed selected is needed to head the grade herd being maintained for the production of beef. (Fig. 3.) Although such a sire may have proved satisfactory, it becomes necessary after a few years to replace him because he has outlived his usefulness or must be removed to avoid inbreeding. Better results will then be obtained with a bull of similar blood lines, provided, of course, that he has desirable quality, scale, and conformation. This practice tends toward the production of calves of

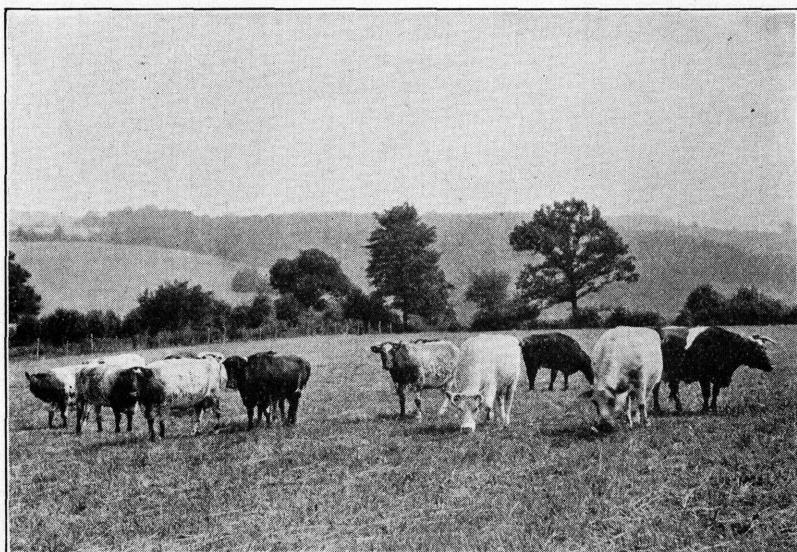


FIGURE 2.—Shorthorn cows of beef type with pronounced milking tendency

uniform type and quality. It is, therefore, an aid both in the selling of stock and in selecting heifers raised on the farm to replace the cows in the herd.

A common practice in buying a bull is to seek one of serviceable age which is known to have sired desirable calves. Although that is sound procedure there are advantages to be gained by purchasing a yearling bull of the desired breeding and type and guaranteed to be a breeder. For example, the purchase of a young bull affords the purchaser a wider selection and may also mean a smaller cash outlay. In addition, the purchase of a young bull a year before he is actually needed for service makes it possible to give him the advantage of liberal feeding and extra care. Moreover, in case of a marked change in environment, this procedure affords sufficient time for him to become acclimatized.

BEEF COWS

It is desirable that the number of beef cows be large enough to enable the owner to market at least one carload of cattle each year and also to provide heifers for replacement of cows in the herd. A few heifers will be needed nearly every year to fill the vacancies in the breeding herd brought about by injury, old age, and irregular breeding of cows. (Fig. 4.)

The size of the herd above the minimum number of cows required for successful operation will depend upon the amount of pasture and upon the quantity of hay and crops that may be produced on the farm for use in wintering stock and in fattening cattle for market. Where the raising of beef cattle on the farm is practicable, pasture is obviously the cheapest feed. The extent and carrying capacity of the pasture and facilities for wintering stock cattle will

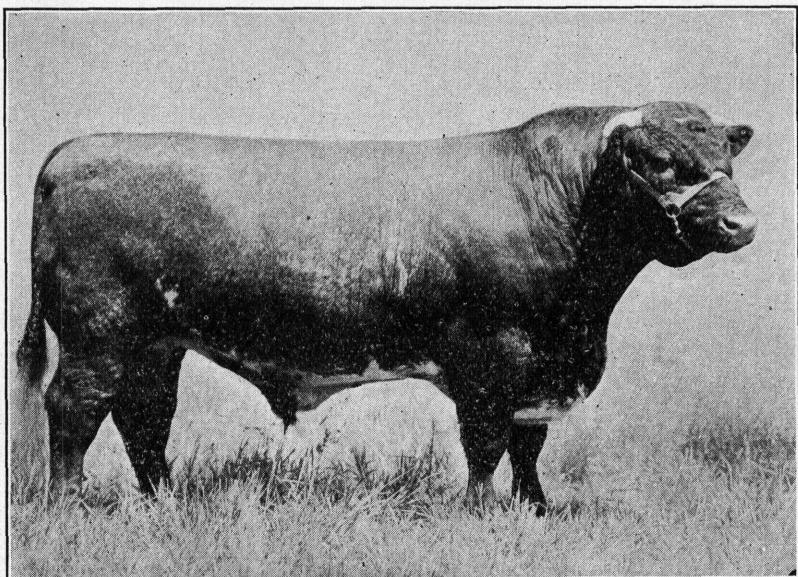


FIGURE 3.—Shorthorn bull. A good example of suitable type of farm herd sire

largely determine whether it is possible to winter the yearlings so they may be fed out and sold as 2-year-old cattle or whether it is best to begin the fattening process early so as to market them as fat yearlings.

DUAL-PURPOSE COWS

Cows with pronounced milking tendency will provide an income from two sources, namely, from the sale of their offspring and from the sale of dairy products. They should possess the characteristics of the beef cow and also the milking tendency to a degree sufficient to produce a substantial quantity of milk or cream for a period of several months. Their calves may be raised either by the double-nursing system or by teaching them to drink milk from a bucket. Considerable care must be exercised in the selection of these cows and heifers in order to hold the individuals comprising the herd to beef type and milking tendency as well.

FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HERD

EQUIPMENT FOR THE BREEDING HERD

The equipment for the breeding herd need not be very extensive. Troughs to provide for a supply of fresh, clean water for all the stock, sufficient material to provide a securely fenced pasture for the bull and for the herd are among the most essential features. In addition, shelter should be provided to protect the cattle during severe weather and especially for breeding cows that calve in the winter and early spring months. Stock can endure severe weather without suffering if they are well fed and have access to a dry place. Every effort should be made to provide good drainage for the lots.

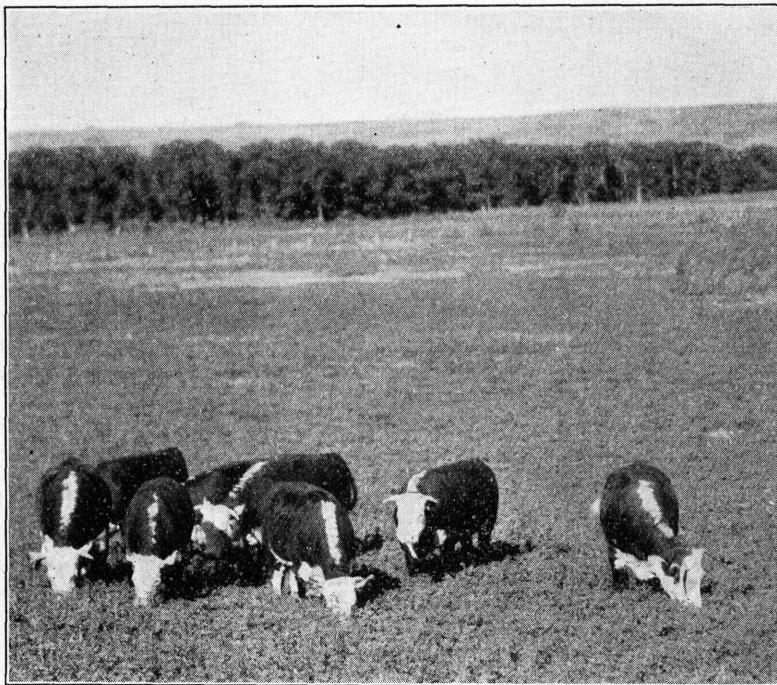


FIGURE 4.—A uniformly good lot of heifers is the result of careful selection of breeding stock and adequate feed

FEEDING AND CARE OF THE HERD BULL

The herd bull should not be allowed to run with the cows during the entire year. A separate inclosure should be provided for the bull, if possible. However, he may be turned out on pasture with the steers after the breeding season if no provision can be made to keep him in a pasture by himself.

When the bull is to be put in heavy service, as, for example, when breeding for spring or fall calves, he will probably need a little extra feed for about 30 days in advance and also during the breeding season in order to be in good breeding condition. (Fig. 5.) For

this purpose a few pounds of grain mixture and possibly a little protein concentrate, such as linseed meal or cottonseed meal or cake, is satisfactory. The grain mixture may be composed of corn or barley, 2 parts, and bran and oats, 1 part each by weight. The quantity of grain mixture to be fed will be determined by his condition, but should not exceed the proportion of 1 pound of grain to each 100 pounds of live weight. One-half or two-thirds of this amount will usually be satisfactory. For example, a 1,400-pound bull on good bluegrass pasture will keep in excellent breeding condition with about 10 pounds of the grain mixture per day. In winter, when there is no pasture, he will probably do well with about 30 pounds of silage, 10 pounds of good-quality alfalfa or other legume hay, and 12 pounds of grain mixture. If a protein concentrate is fed, 1 or 2

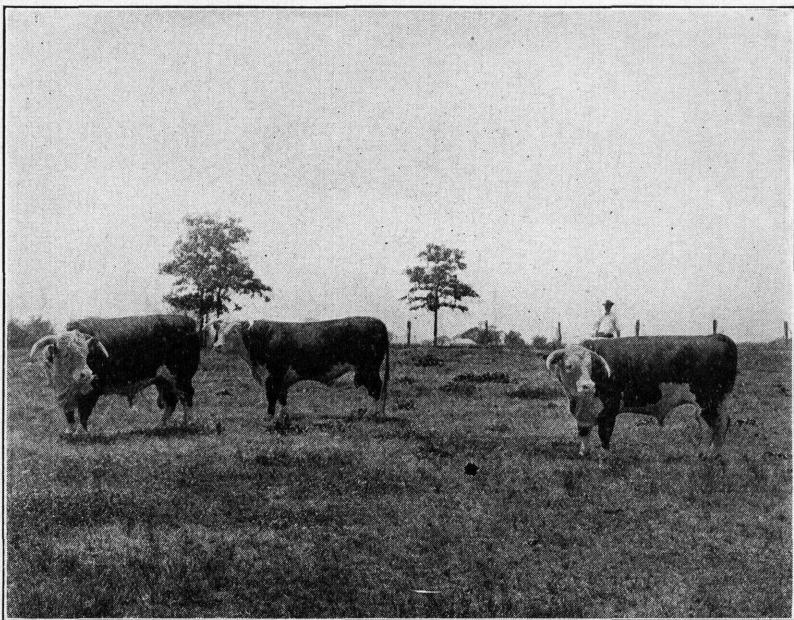


FIGURE 5.—Hereford bulls in thrifty condition. These bulls represent desirable types for farm herds

pounds per day will ordinarily be sufficient, but in any event not over 4 pounds per day should be fed.

If it is advisable to keep the bull in a thrifty breeding condition throughout the year, he will need space for exercise and some form of succulent ration with a little legume hay or protein concentrate and grain mixture. Green pasture will meet most of these requirements. In the absence of pasture, a lot or corral will serve if the bull is provided with sufficient space for exercise and fed a ration containing green feed, silage, beets, or other root crops. A legume hay is preferable, but straw or stover with a little grain and cottonseed cake, linseed meal, or other protein concentrate will be satisfactory.

A bull in good breeding condition is likely to be somewhat temperamental. If he has been dehorned it will be somewhat easier to control

him, but under no circumstances should he be trusted. The more docile and gentle he appears the more careful should be his attendant.

The fence around the lot or corral in which the bull is kept should not prevent him from viewing other cattle but should be very securely constructed.

FEEDING AND CARE OF THE COW HERD

A farm with an adequate summer and winter pasture for the breeding cows is excellently situated when it also has land available for the production of crops which are suitable for fattening cattle.

In early spring or at other times when the grass is exceedingly succulent, the cows will do better if they are supplied with some hay or other dry roughage. As a rule, strictly beef cows will not require supplemental feed while they are grazing good growing pasture. However, cows that are being milked will frequently show better returns if they are fed grain each day at the rate of about 2 pounds to each gallon of milk they give.

Late in the summer or in the fall, when the grass is maturing, the feeding of a legume hay or protein concentrate is advisable.

Silage or root crops will provide the succulence needed in the ration for breeding cows when the latter are not on pasture. Moreover, some kind of legume hay or else straw or stover with a little protein concentrate will be needed to form a suitable ration. Such a ration will contain the necessary nutrients and provide bulk and variety as well.

For dry, pregnant cows, weighing about 1,000 pounds, the following rations are suggested:

RATIONS FOR DRY, PREGNANT COWS

| 1 | Pounds | 5 | Pounds |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Corn or sorgo silage----- | 30 | Alfalfa or clover hay----- | 5 |
| Alfalfa hay ----- | 5 | Mixed or grass hay----- | 15 |
| Straw----- | Unlimited. | Barley----- | 2 |
| 2 | | 6 | |
| Sugar-beet pulp ----- | 40 | Corn or sorgo silage----- | 30 |
| Alfalfa hay ----- | 5 | Oat or barley hay----- | 10 |
| Corn stover or grain hay----- | 10 | Barley----- | 2 |
| 3 | | 7 | |
| Corn or sorgo silage----- | 35 | Sorgo silage----- | 40 |
| Corn stover----- | 10 | Lespedeza or pea-vine hay----- | 5 |
| Cottonseed meal or linseed meal----- | 1 | Velvet beans in pod----- | 2 |
| 4 | | | |
| Corn silage----- | 35 | | |
| Cottonseed hulls or grain straw----- | 10 | | |
| Cottonseed meal----- | 1½ | | |

TABLE 1.—*Gestation table for cows (283 days)*

| Day of month bred | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Explanation: Find date cow was bred in first column and month bred in top line. The date in column below opposite date bred will be the time at which the cow is due to calve | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. |
| 11 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| 2 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 11 |
| 3 | 13 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| 4 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 13 |
| 5 | 15 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 14 |
| 6 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 15 |
| 7 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 16 |
| 8 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 18 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| 9 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 19 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 18 |
| 10 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 19 |
| 11 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 19 | 18 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 20 |
| 12 | 22 | 22 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 21 |
| 13 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 23 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 22 |
| 14 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 24 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 23 |
| 15 | 25 | 25 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 24 |
| 16 | 26 | 26 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 25 |
| 17 | 27 | 27 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 27 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 26 |
| 18 | 28 | 28 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 27 |
| 19 | 29 | 29 | 27 | 27 | 26 | 29 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 28 |
| 20 | 30 | 30 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 29 |
| 21 | 31 | Dec. 1 | 29 | 29 | 28 | 31 | 30 | 31 | July 1 | 31 | 31 | 30 |
| 22 | Nov. 1 | 2 | 30 | 30 | Mar. 1 | Apr. 1 | May 1 | June 1 | July 1 | Aug. 1 | Sept. 1 | Oct. 1 |
| 23 | 2 | 3 | 31 | 31 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 24 | 3 | 4 | Jan. 1 | Feb. 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 25 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 26 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 27 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 28 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 29 | 8 | — | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 30 | 9 | — | 7 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 31 | 10 | — | 8 | — | 10 | — | 10 | — | 10 | — | 10 | 10 |

BREEDING FOR SPRING AND FALL CALVES

The period of gestation for cows is about 283 days, or roughly, about $9\frac{1}{2}$ months. Accordingly, when it is planned to produce spring calves, the cows should be bred as near the month of July as possible. Likewise, in order to obtain fall calves, the cows may be bred in January or February. The advantages derived from uniformity in age and conformation when stock are offered for sale make it particularly desirable to breed all the cows in as short a period as possible. Seasonal activities on the farm as well as the availability of pasture and the crop situation may influence a person in choosing the time of the year best suited to handling young calves. Accordingly, having determined upon the time of the year calves are desired, one need only refer to Table 1 to learn when the cows should be bred.

When cows are grazing good growing pasture they are not likely to require extra care at calving time. They will usually seek a quiet spot somewhat apart from the herd and there drop their calves in a normal manner. Occasionally it may be necessary to help a newborn calf to get its mother's milk for the first time, but unless some unusual difficulty develops, it is best not to disturb the cow. In severe weather, however, it is well to confine the cow which is about to calve in a dry, sheltered place. It is particularly desirable to include silage or root crops in the ration at this time. Linseed meal or bran mash may be added to the ration a few days before calving takes place and continued for several days afterward. These feeds

are of material benefit when a dry ration is being fed. A ration is termed "dry" when it contains no fresh green feed, silage, root crops, pomace, or beet pulp. The quantity of grain should be reduced about one-half a few days previous to calving if the cow is in good condition, but gradually increased afterwards until the normal amount is again being fed.

If the calf does not immediately begin breathing when it is born, any mucus in its mouth or nostrils should be wiped out. Natural breathing may be induced either by forcing air into the lungs with a bellows or by alternate compression and relaxation of the walls of the chest.

Soon after the calf is born the cow should be given all the luke-warm water she desires. Cold water is too severe at such a time. A small feed of bran mash is also beneficial at this time. If the cow is an exceptional milk producer she may have more milk than the calf can take during the first day or two; in that case the udder should be milked out after the calf has finished.

FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF CALVES

Calves which are running with their dams on good pasture generally do well without extra attention. Calves from cows which are to be milked will not need to have their own dam's milk for more than four or five days. They may then be raised either by the double-nursing system or by being taught to drink milk from a bucket.

CALVES FROM DUAL-PURPOSE COWS

With the double-nursing arrangement two calves of approximately the same age are suckled by one cow. This practice permits the calves to get along nearly as well as those with their own mothers in a strictly beef herd, although it involves considerably more labor. With this plan in operation, one-half of the cows in the herd may be used for the production of milk.

With the other method the calves are taken from their dams on the fourth or fifth day after birth and are taught to drink milk, first permitting the calf to suck the feeder's fingers and then immediately immersing the fingers in the milk. When the calf begins to take the milk in this way, the hand may be withdrawn from the bucket. After each feeding the buckets and other utensils used should be cleaned and scalded. If there is sunshine, it is a good plan to place the equipment where it will be exposed to the sun for several hours.

Three or four pounds of whole milk are sufficient for the first day or two, but if the calf should refuse to drink, no effort need be made to force it to drink, the better plan being to take the milk away. Twelve hours later, at the next feeding time, the calf will more than likely be ready to take the milk. The quantity may be slowly increased by about a pound a day until the calf is getting 8 to 10 pounds a day, depending upon its size and ability to handle the milk. Overfeeding should be avoided. It is much easier to prevent digestive disorders that are frequently the result of overfeeding than to correct the difficulty and bring the calf back to normal.

After whole milk has been fed for about two weeks, it may be gradually replaced with skim milk. If the current price of whole

milk is so high as to make limited use of it imperative, the substitution of skim milk may be undertaken when the calves are about 10 days old. At this time about 2 pounds of whole milk should be replaced by the same amount of skim milk each day. In five to seven days the substitution of skim milk may be continued at an increase of 1 pound each day. If there is sufficient skim milk available, the quantity per calf may be gradually increased every week until 15 to 20 pounds are being fed. However, from 12 to 14 pounds will be sufficient when there is occasion to conserve the milk supply, provided the calves are fed an adequate amount of suitable grain mixture, a protein supplement, and hay.

Clean, fresh water and salt should be accessible to the calves at all times.

The calves will readily learn to eat grain and should have a limited quantity each day from the time they are about 3 weeks old. A suitable grain mixture may be made of equal parts, by weight, of wheat bran, ground oats, and coarsely ground corn. In sections where barley costs less than corn of the same quality, it may be used in place of the corn. If barley is fed it should be coarsely ground or rolled.

At first only a handful of the grain mixture need be fed to each calf. When the calves have learned to eat the grain the quantity may be gradually increased to about one-fourth pound per head per day. There should not be any grain left from one feeding to the next. If this does occur, it is an indication that too much has been fed. Accordingly, the surplus should be removed and less fed the next time. The boxes or bunks in which the grain is fed should be kept clean and free from moldy or fermenting grain, because feed in such condition is unwholesome and is likely to cause digestive disorders.

As soon as possible the calves should have access to pasture. In the event that pasture is not available by the time the calves are about a month old either some growing crop may be cut and fed to them, or they may be given a small quantity of silage or sliced beets or carrots. Calves which are running on green pasture or which are confined in a lot or corral should have access to a little clean, bright hay which may best be fed in a rack. Clover, lespedeza, alfalfa, or other legume hay of good quality is very desirable. If these are not available, a little grass or grain hay each day and about a quarter of a pound of protein concentrate every two or three days will be satisfactory. Meals such as linseed, soybean, copra, and gluten feed are classed as protein concentrates. It is not advisable to feed cottonseed meal to young calves.

FEEDING GRAIN TO SUCKLING CALVES

By the time suckling calves which are grazing with their dams are 3 weeks old it should be decided whether they are to be marketed about weaning time or placed in a small inclosure at weaning time and fed for about six months so as to fatten them for market.

If calves are to be marketed at weaning time or shortly thereafter it is well to begin feeding them grain within a small fenced inclosure known as a "creep" (fig. 6), when they are 3 or 4 weeks old. This practice is desirable both because of their efficient use of feed result-

ing in greater selling weight and because of the better finish they will have when marketed. It is good practice to locate the creep near shade trees or in the vicinity of the watering place, preferably on ground which is well drained. The openings in the fence which forms the creep should be large enough to admit calves but small enough to keep out cows. A 6-inch board may be placed across each of the openings about a foot from the ground, to keep out hogs.

Beef calves of good quality should gain about 2 pounds a head daily when creep-fed an average of 4 pounds of a grain mixture over a period of about six months. A mixture of 2 parts of shelled corn and 1 part of whole oats, by weight, is suitable for the first three months of feeding. Thereafter the mixture should be composed of 5 parts of shelled corn, 2 parts of whole oats, and 1 part of linseed meal, by weight.

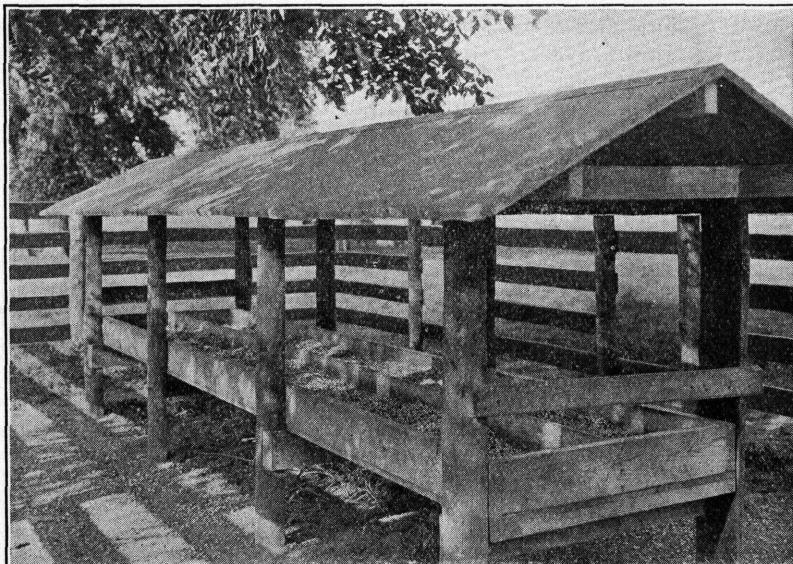


FIGURE 6.—Grain may be fed to calves, which are running with their dams, by means of a "creep." Note opening in fence (at right) large enough to admit the calves but small enough to exclude the cows

One-fourth of a pound a head should be fed in the creep the first two or three days and the quantity then gradually increased so as to average about 1 pound a head daily, during the first 30 days of feeding. Thereafter the grain may be increased gradually until by the end of the fifth month of creep feeding the calves will be consuming about 8 pounds a head daily.

When calves are to be fattened in the dry lot after weaning, creep feeding on grass during the entire suckling period is not recommended, though a modification of this practice may be worth while. For example, if pastures should become short, it would doubtless be well to creep feed prior to weaning and subsequent dry lot finishing, so as to avoid loss of calf fat commonly known as "bloom."

A discussion of the feeding and care of calves from the time they are 6 months old is contained in Farmers' Bulletins 1135, The Beef Calf: Its Growth and Development, and 1549, Feeding Cattle for Beef.

WEANING CALVES

The weaning of calves is comparatively simple. The milk is usually withdrawn from the ration of the bucket-fed calves by the time they are from 6 to 7 months old, but if they have learned to eat hay and grain the quantity of milk fed may be greatly reduced several weeks earlier without stunting the calves. Reduction in the milk supply should be made gradually. For example, 1 pound may be withdrawn on the first and second days, 2 on the third, fourth, and fifth days, and thereafter 1 pound more each day until weaning is complete.

As the calves grow older their grain ration may be slowly increased. The quantity of grain they will need depends on the quantity and kind of other feeds given them. Calves which are kept from their dams, except for a few minutes twice a day while they are permitted to nurse, will make better growth if they learn to eat a little grain mixture and legume hay of good quality when they are about 3 weeks old. At this time the grain mixture may be composed of equal amounts by weight of corn (preferably yellow), crushed oats, and bran. When calves are confined to a dry lot they may learn to eat the grain a little more readily if an older calf that has learned to eat is placed with them.

The weaning of calves which are running with their dams on pasture may be brought about by confining them in a pen out of sight of the other cattle and permitting them to have only one feed from the dams each day for about a week. After that let them feed every other day for three or four times. If the cows are still giving considerable milk and appear to be distressed by swollen udders, some milk may be drawn to relieve the congestion. Otherwise it will be necessary to delay the completion of the weaning process for a week or more.

DEHORNING AND CASTRATING

Unless polled cattle are being raised it is certainly advisable to dehorn the calves. (Fig. 7.) This should be done before the calves are three weeks old. At that early age when the tender horn "buttons" first appear, they may be irritated by scraping with a knife blade and the growth of horn prevented by careful application of the tip of a caustic pencil (stick of potassium hydroxide) which has been slightly moistened at the tip. The action of the caustic causes a scab to form on the irritated area. The scab shrivels and falls off after a few days, leaving a hornless or "polled" head. Detailed instructions for dehorning cattle with a saw, clippers, or with gougers, as well as preventing the growth of horns on young calves by the use of caustic, are contained in Farmers' Bulletin 1600, Dehorning, Castrating, Branding, and Marking Cattle.

Castration of all male calves in the grade herd is necessary for the production of the best beef. The operation should be performed preferably at a time of the year when flies are not prevalent, but as near the age of three to four months as possible.

The spaying of heifers is practiced only to a limited extent, but should never be undertaken until after the most thrifty heifers with

the desired type of quality have been selected and set aside for possible use as replacements in the breeding herd. It is wise to select one or two more heifer calves than it is thought will actually be needed for replacement, so as to permit still further selection when the breeding herd is formed.

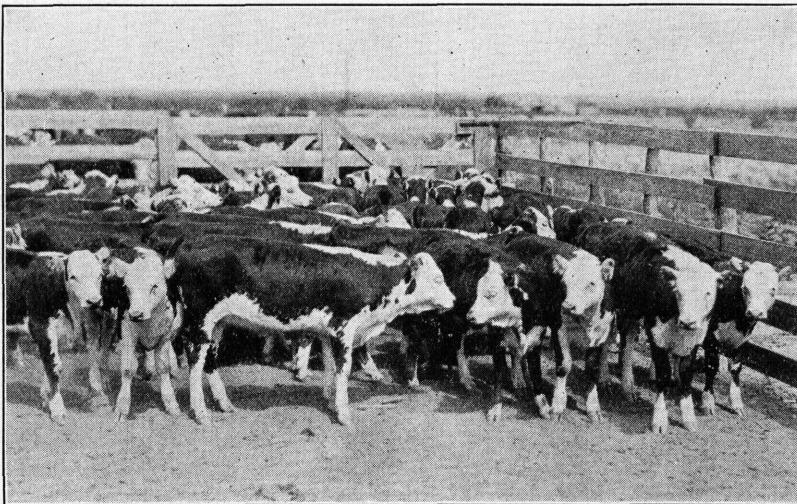


FIGURE 7.—Calves of good quality will convert suitable supplemental feeds into high-grade beef. These Hereford calves were dehorned at an early age

WINTERING STOCK CALVES

For wintering stock calves weighing about 400 pounds, which will not be put into the feed lot until they are long yearlings, one of the following rations is suggested.

RATIONS FOR WINTERING STOCK CALVES

| | Pounds | | Pounds |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | | 4 | |
| Corn or sorgo silage----- | 12 | Corn or sorgo silage----- | 15 |
| Alfalfa, clover, soy-bean, or cow-pea hay ----- | 5 | Timothy, rye, or mixed hay or stover----- | 6 |
| | | Cottonseed meal or linseed meal | ½ |
| 2 | | | 5 |
| Corn or sorgo silage----- | 15 | Corn or sorgo silage----- | 15 |
| Oat, rye, or wheat straw----- | 8 | Lespedeza or pea-vine hay----- | 10 |
| Cottonseed meal or linseed meal | 1 | Velvet beans in pod----- | 4 |
| | | | |
| 3 | | 6 | |
| Corn or sorgo silage----- | 15 | Lespedeza or pea-vine hay----- | 7 |
| Oats ----- | 3 | Grass hay, straw, or stover----- | 2 |
| Cottonseed meal or linseed meal----- | ½ | Cottonseed meal, linseed meal, or peanut meal----- | 1 |

The foregoing rations are intended mainly to serve as a guide to one unfamiliar with feeding practice. It should be remembered that there is a great difference between individuals and between groups of cattle under various conditions, and considerable judgment is required to feed successfully. (Fig. 8.)

SALT REQUIREMENTS

Clean, fresh water and a supply of salt should be accessible to stock at all times. About 2 pounds of salt per head per month is ordinarily satisfactory. Of course, calves require less than that quantity, while heavy steers on full feed or mature cattle being fed a succulent ration need a little more than 2 pounds per head per month.

FEEDING CATTLE FOR MARKET

On most of the farms where beef cattle are raised it will be practicable to fatten them for market. When corn, barley, or kafir grain and a legume hay are grown, one of these grains and the hay will constitute effective economical feeds for fattening young cattle. Other feeds which may be used satisfactorily are mentioned in



FIGURE 8.—High-grade Aberdeen-Angus farm-grown beefeves

Farmers' Bulletin 1549, Feeding Cattle for Beef, which gives more details for feeding and handling cattle to be fattened for market.

SANITATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Cattle which have access to clean, fresh water and are not confined to muddy lots or dark, damp quarters are less likely to become subject to the more common diseases. Simple precautions accompanied by vaccination against blackleg, and if necessary against anthrax also, are not expensive, and are good insurance. Information pertaining to the more common diseases of cattle and their prevention as well as the eradication of infestations of external and internal parasites is available in bulletin form.